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The Daily Tar Heel

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Circus of fools

Charlton Allen. George Battle. Philip Charles-Pierre. Kevin Hunter. Christopher Tuck. The Fretting Five.

These are the prosecutors of the impeachment proceedings that were dropped against Jennifer Lloyd Wednesday night. After Lloyd's name was dragged through the mud for a month. And just in time to keep Lloyd from defending herself for the first time.

The charges were dropped because the prosecution walked out of the proceedings. They claim to have walked out because many members and witnesses did not have sufficient notice of the trial. The lack of notice supposedly created an unfair tribunal.

This assertion stretches the truth to the point of breaking.

Speaker Pro Tempore Mike Kolb phoned every member and spoke to either the member, their answering machine or their roommate, AND mailed a letter to every member's last known address (at his own expense) informing them of the meeting and its purpose. Every member of Student Congress who has been available for comment knew about the meeting and its purpose.

Actually, the prosecution walked out because Allen and Hunter went to the State Fair. As witnesses, they were indispensable for the prosecution to support its already weak case. But the impeachment proceedings that Allen and Hunter began with so many delusions of grandeur and so much self-righteous blather about serving the student body and the law of student government were not as important as trying

to catch a glimpse of President Bush.

Remember the names Charlton Allen and Kevin Hunter. Write them down or clip this editorial and save it until the spring elections. Never, ever vote for either of these rascals for any office.

The remaining members of the prosecuting coalition were left holding the bag when their fellows deserted ship. But, in walking out of the proceeding, they looked just like Allen and Hunter, rats fleeing a sinking ship. Battle, Tuck and Charles-Pierre have only themselves to blame for joining such an unholy alliance for such a misguided purpose.

After a month of impeachment proceedings, perhaps what should be considered impeachable offenses finally have materialized. In a perfect world, the members of the prosecution could be impeached for their complete lack of integrity, dignity, civility, sense of duty or willingness to be straightforward and fair. After Wednesday night's fiasco, there is not a single scruple nor hint of decent ethics to be found among the lot of these scoundrels.

And while we're in such an impeachy-keen mood, maybe they also should be thrown out of congress for failing to bring bread to the circus they sponsored. Caesar's rule — that you can't hold a circus for the masses without providing bread — should be written somewhere in the Student Government Code.

But it isn't a perfect world and, sadly, the code is incomplete, but during this spring's election, students will have the option of throwing these clowns to the lions and out of Student Congress.

Airport talks take off

Plans to move UNC's Horace Williams Airport crash landed three years ago, but a group of consultants, University officials and local residents again are winding the propeller for what could be a successful takeoff.

Instead of close-minded bickering and bantering about the airport (which became the norm in past discussions), the Horace Williams Airport Preliminary Dialogue Group will bring the debate to a civilized level.

Of course, the issues haven't changed: UNC still needs the airport for the Area Health Education Centers program, in which UNC Hospitals provides continuing education and consulting clinics to rural areas around the state. Local residents think the airport is too close to neighborhoods and schools. Area pilots and plane owners use the airport for their needs. Others believe UNC could simply use nearby Raleigh-Durham International Airport.

And while the arguments are strong on all sides, one thing remains clear — the University needs its own airport near campus, preferably in Orange County. Private plane owners don't necessarily need the airport, and alumni coming to town for football

and basketball games easily could use RDU. But AHEC is far too important to get lost in the cracks of an already crowded international airport.

The discussion group, which includes four mediators from the University of Virginia's Institute for Environmental Negotiation, could find common ground among the various groups involved. When the University and local governments announced in May that they would bring in an out-of-town consulting firm, they admitted the problem was too complicated to handle on their own.

Even at the initial meeting, which was used primarily for the interested parties to meet each other in a non-confrontational atmosphere, the mediators showed they could help slice through the rhetoric. In addition, two resident-interest groups, Citizens for Airport Planning and Stop the County Regional Airport Plan, are attending the meetings and see the discussions as an opportunity for their voices finally to be taken seriously by the power structure.

It's a positive step that all interested parties finally can talk on an even plane. The group meets again Nov. 18 and must work at full throttle to resolve this ancient controversy.

How long?

Editor's note: The following editorial appeared in the Oct. 26, 1991, edition of The Daily Tar Heel.

The Student Legislature pulled another boner last night. In consideration of an item in the newly devised budget that would give The Daily Tar Heel an additional \$4,000 over last spring's budget, the student solons included a stipulation dictating exactly what the money is to be used for.

In effect, the Student Legislature has now set a precedent by which it can virtually control the publication policies of the newspaper, an unconstitutional point in itself. In this particular case, the Legislature has allocated the money, "subject to the condition that The Daily Tar Heel reverts back to the standard size newspaper."

According to the figures of such competent people as Ernest Delancey, financial adviser to the Publications Board, the newspaper cannot possibly revert to standard size and continue, through the

spring quarter, on anything like a daily basis. The Publications Board rejected the advice, and, in turn, the Legislature has followed.

So, now we have a Legislature that rejects the advice of the financial advisers it hires; it rejects the advice of an editor who was elected on the basis that she publish as "daily as possible" a newspaper; and we have a Legislature that proposes also to dictate to what has heretofore been known as an independent student newspaper.

We can give the solons some benefit of the doubt in that many of them have, as before, failed to fully acquaint themselves with the reliable facts... How many more times will they pass measures that are suspect for unconstitutionality? How long do they intend to dictate in the true Hearst fashion?



The Daily Tar Heel

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Better to laugh than preach about stereotypes

I hate your column." Before I heard those words Saturday night, it had been difficult to get my attention. In fact, no one could keep me standing still for more than a few minutes before I was off greeting late arrivals or tapping another keg. After all, when you've got 300 people trashing your house, it's pretty easy to get distracted.

But this guy stopped me in my tracks. Don't get me wrong; I know I'm no master of the written word. Far from it. And because I'm dealing with such a "controversial" topic, I do expect criticism. I guess I was just a little surprised at the source.

"I think your last column set the gay community in Chapel Hill back 10 years."

There he goes again. Wasn't this a little harsh? After all, he's standing there on my yard, drinking my beer. Who does this guy think he is, anyway? Hmmm, isn't that the keg calling?

"You're so in your face. You're not making fun of gay stereotypes; you're embracing them. You've got to remember you're not writing for just 10 percent of the student body; most of your readers are straight."

OK, time to turn up the Pet Shop Boys. This conversation is not going the way I'd like it to go. I wonder how much money is in the keg donation jars?

"When you write a column, people think you're speaking for the entire gay community. Last week's column did not speak for me at all. You're just not being responsible."

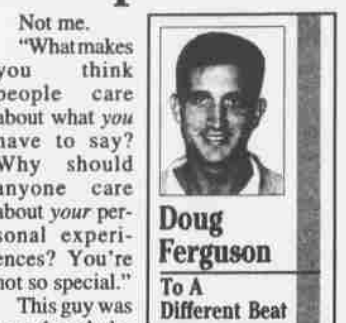
And to think I was going to ask this guy out to dinner!

"Why are you writing this column, anyway? Do you really think it's doing any good, or are you just writing it for yourself? You think pretty highly of yourself, don't you?"

I wasn't really prepared to think about all this. In fact, I wasn't in very good shape to think about much of anything at all.

I was at the game, too, you know. I was even on the field when the final seconds ticked off the clock.

Ahh, the joys of having a press pass. From the looks of things, there probably weren't a whole lot of people doing much thinking Saturday night. Who wants to think when you've just won your Homecoming game 26-14?



Not me. "What makes you think people care about what you have to say? Why should anyone care about your personal experiences? You're not so special."

This guy was bound and determined to make me think, wild party or no. But I wasn't sure how to respond. Gay people had given me ideas for columns before. Some had even offered a few helpful critiques. But this guy was ripping me to shreds.

I'm not so sure I convinced him of anything Saturday night, so I'm going to give it another try, hangover notwithstanding...

I've been having a lot of fun with this column. And I guess some of them — check that — all of them have been a little "in your face."

I don't know. I usually don't consider myself an angry person, but maybe I am. And maybe I use the back pages of The Daily Tar Heel to vent some of that frustration and anger. But if that's the case, I'm probably doing the reverse of what I want to do: alienating people instead of educating them, scaring people instead of making them more comfortable.

If I'm doing that, then I'm just shooting myself — and every other gay person — in the foot. So maybe I should take a different approach.

But what should that approach be? My biggest fan didn't seem to have any clear suggestions. I guess he was too busy drinking more of my beer.

One thing I can do, though, is make it perfectly clear right now that in my column, I can't speak for every gay man and lesbian. I don't even attempt to. There are a few common concerns I can and will address, but that's about the extent of it.

From "drag queens" to leather men, from "diesel dykes" to "lipstick lesbians," gay men and lesbians come in all shapes, sizes and descriptions. Most of us look and act just like the average straight person — whatever that is — but there are also quite a few of us who

don't. How could I speak with all of their voices?

The answer is simple. I can't.

My column is my voice. It's the voice of one man... one gay, white, Southern, Protestant, middle-class man who grew up in a moderately conservative city in the South.

Notice all of the adjectives? They are there for a reason.

They define who I am. They should give you some idea of where I'm coming from.

They should tell you that I have biases, slants, ideas and experiences that differ vastly from many other gay men and women.

They tell you that Doug Ferguson speaks for Doug Ferguson.

So why should anyone care what Doug Ferguson has to say?

Well, maybe someone, somewhere along the way will see a little bit of themselves in me... maybe even somebody straight. I know I'm nobody special. I know I'm just like everybody else. And that's precisely why people might actually listen to me.

I hope. But I still want to have a little fun, and I think I should be allowed to. Why can't I "embrace" a few gay stereotypes once and awhile.

After all, some of them, Ms. Thang, are kind of fun. And, girlfriend, if you loosened up a little bit, maybe you'd realize that.

In addition, if every use of a gay stereotype in my column was followed by a disclaimer, I think it would defeat the purpose of using them in the first place: to give people a few laughs. Better laughing than throwing bricks through my windows. Better laughing than preaching.

Catch my drift? I make a lot of mistakes. I don't deny them. I don't defend them. But I'm kind of treading new ground here.

I hope that for the sake of my reputation — and for the sake of every person affected by this column — that readers recognize this fact and are forgiving.

Believe me, sister, this tired old girl could use a break (wink... wink).

Doug Ferguson is a senior journalism major from Charlotte.

READERS' FORUM

Congress impeachment scheme was shameful

To the editor: George Battle and Philip Charles-Pierre correctly pointed out that many representatives were not present at Wednesday's trial. What they didn't say was that they were responsible for the low turnout.

When George and Philip learned that several of their votes against speaker were going to be at the state fair, they tried to prevent the Student Congress from reaching quorum. They did this by telling representatives either not to come or that the meeting wasn't going to be held. This would have forced the postponement that they so desperately wanted.

Of all the underhanded schemes I have seen in four Student Congresses, this one is the worst. Thankfully, it didn't work, and justice was served. George and Philip should be ashamed.

MARK SHELburnE
Senior
Public Policy

YRs: All students should have political tolerance

To the editor: Due to the fact that there is no College Republicans organization on the campus of UNC, the UNC Young Republicans would like to respond to Jane A.K. Norman's Oct. 22 letter. Like the Young Democrats, the Young Republicans believe in the freedom of speech as guaranteed by the First Amendment, and we encourage everyone to become involved in some way with their government.

The YRs never have been approached by the Young Democrats with a pro-

posal similar to that which Ms. Norman discussed. On our own initiative, however, the YRs have encouraged all members to respect other organizations' materials. To the best of our knowledge, our members have not been involved in any defacing or removal of rival organization's material. Like Ms. Norman, we have felt the frustration of investing much of our time putting up signs and posters and having them torn down only hours later.

During this political season, many candidates from both parties have traveled to UNC to address the students. In order to get through all the political rhetoric, it is essential to ask the candidates themselves to explain their record on issues relevant to student concerns. Some might call the process of asking tough questions persecution, but how are students supposed to get to the heart of the issues unless they ask these kinds of questions? This has been a cornerstone of American politics since the Revolution. Several members of our organization did go of their own volition to ask Mr. Wicker questions on issues that were of concern to them. Mr. Wicker refused to answer their questions and was wisked away by the Young Democrats. Two weeks later when Art Pope spoke, several YDs were present and asked tough questions, which Mr. Pope answered directly and with the utmost respect.

We have several concerns of our own that we would like to address at this point. Fliers advertising Bill Clinton's visit to Raleigh were taped to the paint of a member's car that displayed Republican bumper stickers. Other Republicans who display campaign materials on their doors have been harassed by those who do not share their political views. We realize that it is only a handful of overzealous fanatics who are often caught up in their support of a par-

ticular candidate.

Our organization has put many hours of CONSTRUCTIVE work into the support of Republican candidates and will continue to behave in such a manner until the election has ended. Rather than make haphazard stabs in the dark, we issue a request to ALL students, whether involved in politics or not, to respect all of the work and dedication that goes into putting up fliers and getting speakers to come to campus by continuing to practice the same type of political tolerance that has made America the model of democracy throughout the world. Since this is a government "of the people, for the people and by the people," we encourage all students to exercise their power over the government by voting on Nov. 3.

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Letters policy

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments and criticisms. We attempt to print as many letters to the editor as space permits. When writing letters, please follow these guidelines:

- Letters should be limited to 400 words. Shorter letters have a better chance of running.
- If you want your letter published, sign and date it. No more than two signatures.
- All letters must be typed and double-spaced.
- Include your year in school, major, phone number and hometown.